

Equal Opportunities Policy

This section contains an extract from Community Pharmacy Surrey & Sussex employment policies and procedures, which may be added to or amended from time to time.

1.1 Equal Opportunities Policy

We are committed to a policy of treating all of our staff and job applicants equally and not to discriminate against staff on the basis of their gender, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, gender reassignment, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, disability or age.

This policy applies to all employees whether permanent, temporary, casual, part-time or on fixed-term contracts, to ex-employees, job applicants and to individuals such as agency staff and consultants who are not our employees but who work at the LPC. Equally, this policy applies to the treatment of visitors, clients, customers, and suppliers by members of our workforce. Furthermore, this policy applies to the advertising of jobs and recruitment and selection, to training and development, opportunities for promotion, to conditions of service, benefits and facilities and pay, to health and safety and to conduct at work, to Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures and to the termination of employment, including redundancy.

All staff have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and therefore to treat colleagues with dignity at all times and not to discriminate against or harass other members of staff, whether junior or senior to them. In some situations, the LPC may be at risk of being held responsible for the acts of individual members of staff and will not therefore tolerate any discriminatory practices or behaviour. Staff should also be aware that they will be personally liable for any acts of discrimination that they commit.

Forms of discrimination

Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally. Direct discrimination occurs where someone is put at a disadvantage for a reason related to one or more of the grounds set out above. For example, rejecting an applicant of one race because it is considered they would not "fit in" on the grounds of their race could be direct discrimination.

Indirect discrimination occurs where an individual is subject to an unjustified provision, criterion or practice which puts them at a particular disadvantage because of, for example, their sex or race. For example, a height requirement would be likely to eliminate proportionately more women than men. If these

criteria cannot be objectively justified for a reason unconnected with sex, it would be indirectly discriminatory on the grounds of sex.

Discrimination also includes victimisation (less favourable treatment because of action taken to assert legal rights against discrimination or to assist a colleague in that regard) and harassment.

Recruitment and selection

We aim to ensure that no job applicant receives less favourable treatment on any unlawful grounds listed in this policy. We regularly review our recruitment procedures to ensure that all individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities. Job selection criteria are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are essential for the effective performance of the job and therefore justified on non-discriminatory grounds. Job selection criteria, job descriptions, person specifications and any interview arrangements and tests will be reviewed and considered on a regular basis on behalf of the LPC to ensure that these remain relevant and free from any unjustifiable bias, either in content or in scoring mechanism.

We also take steps to ensure that knowledge of vacancies reaches a wide labour market and, where relevant, groups under-represented in our organisation. Vacancy advertisements shall include an appropriate short statement on our Equal Opportunities Policy and a copy of this policy shall be sent to those who enquire about vacancies.

To ensure that this policy is operating effectively and to identify those sections of the local community which may be under-represented in employment, we monitor applicants' racial origins, gender, disability and age as part of the recruitment procedure. We also maintain records of this data in an anonymised format solely for the purposes stated in this policy. Ongoing monitoring and regular analysis of the data obtained provide the basis for taking appropriate steps to eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination and implement this policy.

Staff training and promotion

The training needs of our staff will be identified through regular staff appraisals. All staff will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the organisation and all promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit. We will also regularly review the composition and movement of staff at different levels to ensure the quality of opportunity at all levels of the LPC. Where identified, steps will be taken to remove unnecessary or unjustifiable barriers and to provide appropriate facilities and conditions of service to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or under-represented groups.

Termination of employment

We will monitor redundancy criteria and procedures to ensure that they are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory. We will also ensure that disciplinary procedures are carried out fairly and uniformly for all employees, whether they result in the giving of disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

Disability discrimination

If you are disabled, or become disabled in the course of your employment or engagement with us, we would encourage you to tell us about your condition. This will enable us to support you as much as possible and discuss with you any reasonable adjustments to your working conditions or the duties of your job which you consider to be necessary or which would assist you in the performance of your duties. In some circumstances we may wish to consult with you and with your medical adviser about possible reasonable adjustments. We will always give careful consideration to any proposals received from you and your advisers and they will be accommodated where possible and proportionate to the needs of your job. Nevertheless, there may be circumstances where it will not be reasonable for us to accommodate suggested adjustments and we will ensure that we provide you with information as to the basis of our decision not to make any adjustments. Our decision will also consider the means and resources available to the LPC.

We will monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they place disabled workers, job applicants or service users at a substantial disadvantage compared with other staff. Where possible, and proportionate, we will take steps to improve access for disabled staff and service users.

Fixed-term employees

We monitor our use of fixed-term employees and agency workers, and their conditions of service, to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits, training, promotion, and permanent employment opportunities. We will, where relevant, monitor their progress to ensure that they are accessing permanent vacancies.

Part-time workers

We monitor the conditions of service of part-time employees in their progression to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits and training and promotion opportunities. We will ensure requests to alter working hours are dealt with appropriately.

Breaches of the policy

If you believe that you may have been discriminated against you are encouraged to raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure. If you are uncertain or need advice on how to proceed, you should speak to the CPSS Executive Committee Member HR lead, in the first instance.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Staff who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

Any member of staff who is found to have committed acts of discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. We will always take a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

Adopted and approved, October 2020, Community Pharmacy Surrey & Sussex Executive Committee. Next revision – 2 years, prior subject to updates in employment legislation